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Special Appeal For Prayers

In his Friday Sermon of August 23, 2024, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (May Allah be his Helper) instructed us to recite the following prayers to remain within the fortress of Divine protection, safe from Satanic onslaughts:

سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ وَبِحَمْدِهٖ سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ الْعَظِيمِ اللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

Translation: *Holy is Allah with His praise, Holy is Allah the Great, O Allah, bless Muhammad and the people of Muhammad*

(200 Times Daily for age 25+, 100 Times Daily for ages 15-25, 33 Times Daily for children and 3-4 Times Daily for small children

اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ رَبِّي مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَاَتُوبُ اِلَيْهِ

Translation: *I seek forgiveness from Allah, my Lord, for all my sins, and turn to Him.*

(100 Times Daily)

رَبِّ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ خَادِمُكَ رَبِّ فَاحْفَظْنِي وَانْصُرْنِي وَارْحَمْنِي

Translation: *O my Lord, everything is Your servant. O my Lord, so protect me, help me and have mercy upon me!*

(100 Times Daily)

His Holiness said that these days when Satan is trying to attack our Community and the world at large, the only way for us to remain safeguarded is through prayers. Hence, we should recite these prayers, not just during the days of Jalsa but throughout the year.

(Friday Sermon of August 23, 2024)

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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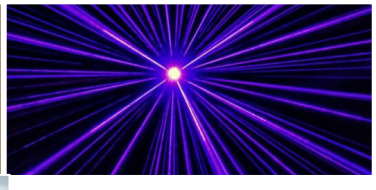
Dr. Hameed A. Mirza 

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The Holy Qur'an

فِيْهِ اٰيٰتٌۢ بَيِّنٰتٌ مَّقَامُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ۚ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهٗ كَانَ اٰمِنًا ۗ وَلِلّٰهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ
اسْتَطَاعَ اِلَيْهِ سَبِيْلًا ۗ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾

Translation

In it are manifest Signs; it is the place of Abraham; and whoso enters it, enters peace. And pilgrimage to the House is a duty which men — those who can find a way thither — owe to Allah. And whoever disbelieves, let him remember that Allah is surely independent of all creatures.

(Aal-e-Imran:98)

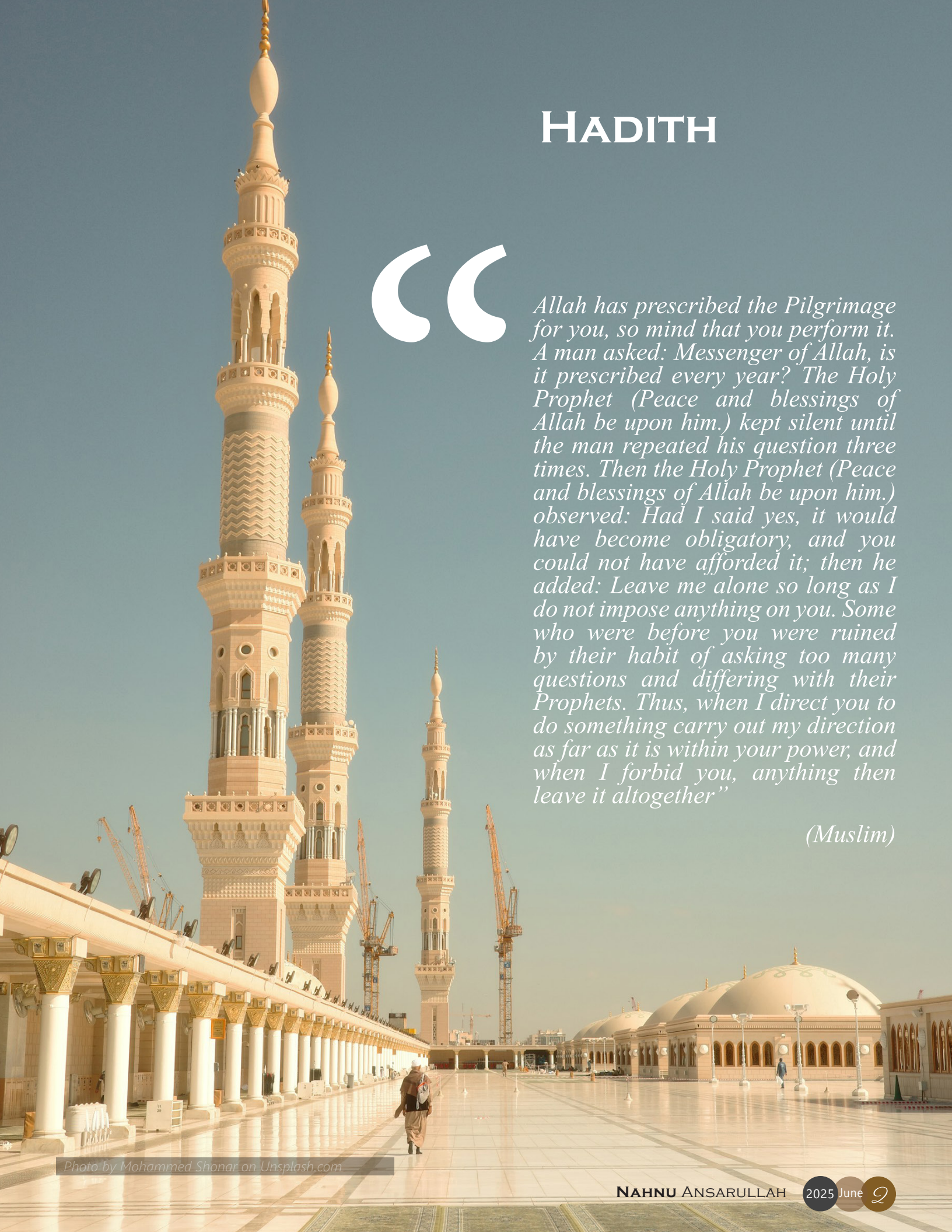
Short Commentary

After alluding to the historical evidence in favour of the Ka'bah, the Quran proceeds to state that reason also demands that the Ka'bah should be adopted as the Qiblah. The verse gives reasons to show that the Ka'bah is entitled to be adopted as the Qiblah or the centre of God's religion.

As hinted in the words, the place of Abraham, is that Abraham came and prayed here. Jews and Christians, to both of whom Abraham is worthy of great reverence, must admit that Abraham visited the place. Therefore, it cannot be denied that it is a blessed place.

Furthermore, it referred to in the words whoso enters it enters peace, is that the Ka'bah not only promises but also affords peace and security to those who enter it. This promise has been literally fulfilled. Temporally, God has ever protected it against wars and invasions both in ancient and modern times. The way in which Abrahah, ruler of Yemen, and his hosts were destroyed when they tried to invade the Ka'bah and the way in which this territory, which then formed a part of the dominion of Turkey, was kept outside the conflict during the First World War (1914-18) afford remarkable instances of how miraculously God protects the Ka'bah. Unlike the sacred places of other nations, it has never fallen into the hands of a people who would not revere it. Even in the Days of Ignorance when the different tribes of pagan Arabia were constantly at war with one another, the territory of the Ka'bah was held to be sacred and no fighting was allowed therein. Spiritually, also, it is a place of security for those who enter it in the spiritual sense, i.e. embrace the religion of Islam. They become recipients of divine favours and enjoy security from the punishment of God.

Hadith



Allah has prescribed the Pilgrimage for you, so mind that you perform it. A man asked: Messenger of Allah, is it prescribed every year? The Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.) kept silent until the man repeated his question three times. Then the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.) observed: Had I said yes, it would have become obligatory, and you could not have afforded it; then he added: Leave me alone so long as I do not impose anything on you. Some who were before you were ruined by their habit of asking too many questions and differing with their Prophets. Thus, when I direct you to do something carry out my direction as far as it is within your power, and when I forbid you, anything then leave it altogether"

(Muslim)

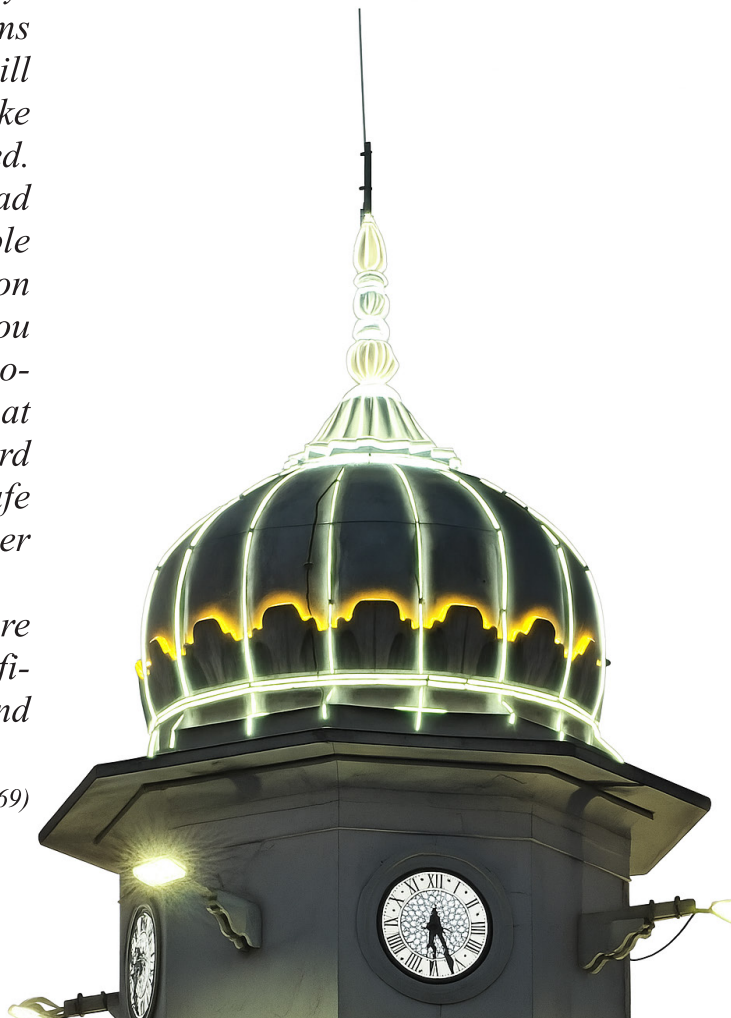
Photo by Mohammed Shonar on Unsplash.com

So said the Promised Messiah as

So, know it with certainty that just as, in keeping with the prophecy, there have been earthquakes in America and in Europe, so will they occur in different parts of Asia, and some of them will be like the Doomsday. There will be death on such a large scale that streams of blood will flow. Even birds and grazing animals will not escape this death. Such destruction will overtake the earth as has not happened since man was created. Most places will be turned upside down as if they had never been inhabited. There will also be other terrible afflictions, both in heaven and earth [...] Do you reckon that you will be safe from these earthquakes, or that you can save yourselves by your own machinations? Absolutely not. All human works will come to an end that day. Do not imagine that America etc. were hit hard by severe earthquakes while your country remains safe from them. Rather, I see that perhaps you will encounter greater adversity than them.

" O Europe! You are not safe! And O Asia! Neither are you secure! And O the dwellers of Islands! No artificial 'God' will come to your aid. I see cities falling and habitations in ruin.'

(Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Ruhani Khazain, Vol. 22, pp. 268-269)



In The Words Of The Promised Messiah as: Prayers For The Attendees Of The Annual ConventioN

6th August 2021 (The Review of Religions)

The Promised Messiah as , Imam Mahdi (Guided One), Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as

“

I conclude with the prayer that everyone who travels for [attending] this Convention that is for the sake of Allah: May Allah, the Exalted, be with him, reward him in abundant measure, have mercy on him, ease up for him his circumstances of hardship and anxiety and eliminate his anguish and grief. May He grant him freedom from every single hardship and lay open for him the ways of [achieving] his cherished goals, and raise him up, on the day of Judgment, among those of His servants who are the recipients of His blessings and Mercy. May He be their Guardian in their absence until after their journey comes to an end. O Allah! O Sublime One and Bestower of bounties, the Ever Merciful and One Who Resolves all problems, do grant all these prayers, and grant us victory over our opponents with scintillating signs, because You alone have all the prowess and power. Aameen! Aameen!!’

Time And Tide Waited For One

Asif Basit-London,UK

Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) Narrates a Momentous Series of Events:

The days that ensued the demise of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy upon him) and before the Election of the Fifth Khalifa were turbulent days for the entire Jama'at. A lot has been said and written about that time and its sensitivity, but we always remained curious to know what Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper) went through. 15 years have passed in this curiosity but thanks to Al Hakam that enabled me to muster up the courage to ask.

A few days ago, in a blessed moment, I enquired about this from Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) and Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) most graciously shed light on it. I have no claim or experience of speedwriting, but Allah enabled me to jot down every word that Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) said in reply. Below, is the translation of the original Urdu narration of events by Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V (may Allah be his Helper) .

Hazrat Sahibzada Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah be his Helper), prior to Khilafat

"I arrived home from my office to be told by

my wife that Mian Luqman had called from London to say that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy upon him) had passed away. I immediately called Dr. Nuri sahib who was in London at the time, as a medical advisor to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy upon him). He confirmed the devastating news.

This news came as a great shock. The sorrow was overwhelming, but the sensitivity of the situation demanded complete control of emotions as it was a testing time for the entire Jamaat. As Nazir-e-Ala [Chief Secretary], it was my responsibility to organise the series of events that would follow and oversee them.

I called the Private Secretary in London who, I realised, was then unaware of the situation. I asked him to gather all the details and send

them to me as soon as possible.

In the meantime, I called a meeting of the Ulia Committee, which comprised the key officials of Jamaat bodies, like Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya and Tehrik-e-Jadid etc. I gave instructions in the wake of the emergency situation. I also had to ensure that visas were up to date and that there were travel arrangements for members of the Electoral College; those whose visas had expired, I ensured that they were given visas as quickly as possible.

In the meantime, I received the details of the time and cause of Huzoor's demise from the Private Secretary. I conveyed these to Mian Ahmad sahib [the late Sahibzada Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sahib] along with instructions on drafting an announcement to inform the Jama'ats around the world. He brought back to me the draft for approval, which was then sent out to all Jama'ats and also broadcast on MTA. I had already instructed Sultan Mahmood Anwar sahib to make a formal announcement after the Asr prayer in Masjid Mubarak. That time was a test of patience. On one hand, there was the grief of Huzoor's (may Allah have mercy upon him) demise and on the other, the responsibility of fulfilling a crucial duty that had been entrusted to me by Huzoor (may Allah have mercy upon him): the duty of supervising the arrangements of Intikhab-e-Khilafat [election of the new Khalifa].

With these mixed emotions, I headed home to prepare for my flight to London. The preparation, by the way, was nothing more than grabbing a few clothes alongside my travel documents and setting off for departure.

As visas were still being processed for a few members of the Electoral College, it was decided that the members be split into two convoys: one to fly on the same day and the other to leave the following day once the visas had been acquired.

In the first convoy were Mian Khurshid sahib [the late Sahibzada Mirza Khurshid Ahmad sahib], Mian Ahmad sahib [the late Sahibzada Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sahib], Mian Anas Ahmad sahib and me; we were fourteen members altogether. We set off from Rabwah to Lahore where we were to catch the flight. There was a short transit in Abu Dhabi from where we boarded the London bound flight.

I had already given instructions from Rabwah about washing and shrouding the body. When we arrived in London, the body had been washed, shrouded and placed in a casket and Huzoor (may Allah have mercy upon him) was laid in state in Mahmood Hall for members of the Jama'at to pay their respects. I, too, initially paid my respects here in Mahmood Hall. The way one feels upon seeing their Imam in that situation cannot be described in words. But you can imagine; so, imagine what my feelings were in that moment.

By then, it was time for Namaz [prayers], so we offered Namaz in the Fazl Mosque. Now, Huzoor's (may Allah have mercy upon him) body had been moved to a room adjacent to Mahmood Hall. I went to that room. A strange moment that was; in the room was Huzoor (may Allah have mercy upon him), me and absolute silence. It was a surreal setting. I stayed there, at Huzoor's (may Allah have mercy upon him) side, for quite some time, praying for Huzoor (may Allah have mercy upon him). Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (may Allah have mercy upon him), had issued a set of instructions well before his demise, for such an emergency situation. One clause was that before the arrival of Nazir-e-Ala in London, Amir Jama'at UK would be Additional Nazir-e-Ala to oversee necessary arrangements in the meantime. Upon arrival, I took charge from Amir sahib UK and commenced the process for convening the Electoral College, the funeral and the burial etc. Time was short; a lot had to be done, and every task required full care and attention.

By the sheer blessings of Allah, everything was organised in good time. I felt at peace that I had fulfilled my duty. Every moment was spent praying that Allah granted the Jama'at a new Khalifa, and that I and every member of the Jama'at were able to obey the new Khalifa; every moment was spent praying that Allah may keep the Jama'at united.

This state is, indeed, a state of fear. So of course, there was fear. But there was also firm faith in Allah's promise that He would replace this state of fear with security. Thus, I was under the strong belief that Allah would grant the Jama'at a new Khalifa and that our fears would be replaced with peace.

Then came the time for the Election. As a member, I also entered the Fazl Mosque that was full of members of the Electoral College. I stood near the shoes with Chaudhry Hameedullah sahib for a while. Chaudhry sahib, as the senior-most official of the Jama'at, was to preside over the Election, so when he was called to the front, I sat where I was stood, at the back of the Mosque. The aura of the gathering was such that I did not have the courage to peer up and glance around nor did my conscience permit; a fragile time as it was. Thus, I sat with my gaze down. When my name was presented, I felt instant fear, so I lowered my head.

When the votes were counted and the announcement made, I was confident that there must have been a mistake in the count. What happened after this made me tremble; there was no choice but to accept the decree of God. The Bai'at and silent prayer followed. How I felt in that moment, the whole world saw on MTA. It was as if the weight of a mountain had been placed on my shoulders. It was midnight or even past midnight when I got to [my residence at number] 41, Guest House. There, in my room was I, the darkness of the night and the blessings of my God."

Moments after the Election of Khalifatul Masih V, Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) paused here.

Having heard this directly from Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper), I was enchanted and did not know how to ask for more details. But in that precious moment, I felt that I owed more to the readers of Al Hakam and so, built the courage to gather more pearls. "What thoughts had crossed your mind, leaving Rabwah, Huzoor?" Our beloved master, in his humility, replied in a low tone:

"There was so much to be done before my departure that I did not have much else on my mind. However, I had said to my wife that on the seventh day after the Election, I would seek permission from the new Khalifa to return. I was also mentally prepared that the new Khalifatul Masih might not assign me the same responsibility I had. But I pledged to myself that whatever responsibilities were assigned to me, I would perform them wholeheartedly and then return."

I thought that this was it. But my master probably sensed my curiosity.

"Is that it? What else did you want to hear?"

He said this with great affection; the affection that produces valour. I asked, "Your life must have drastically changed after becomingKhalifa. How does it feel?" The reply was simple but enlightening.

"That moment was a 'U-turn' in my life. What I had left behind, remained there and where I am heading to is, by Allah's will, in constant motion. I was a free man, fond of sowing seeds and harvesting crops – a simple farmer. Then I was appointed as Nazir-e-Ala, and from then on, I had to perform administrative responsibilities. Then, Allah entrusted me with this responsibility."

As I walked out of Huzoor'saa office, I was spellbound. Before my very eyes were the crops that had yielded out of the seeds sown by this great Khalifa, which he continues

The Rituals And Procedures Of Hajj

(Courtesy: alislam.org)

The fifth act of Islamic worship is the performing of the Hajj or the pilgrimage to Mecca. A Muslim must perform this pilgrimage at least once in his lifetime if economic and political conditions are favourable. The focal point of this pilgrimage is the Ka'ba, which was rebuilt by Prophet Abraham some 4,000 years ago. Today, the Ka'ba stands in the middle of a large courtyard of Masjid al Haram or the Sacred Mosque. The courtyard of Masjid al Haram contains, besides Ka'ba, the Maqam a Ibrahim and the fountain of Zamzam.

The Hajj is performed during the Muslim month of Dhul Hijjah which comes two months after the festival of Eid al Fitr. The various rituals of the Hajj include:

Entering the state of ihram by wearing only two seamless white sheets. This is done by the pilgrims when they reach certain designated places close to Mecca.

1. Saying of talbiyah starting at the place where the ihram is worn. Talbiyah consists of saying aloud the following:

2. Here we come, O God, here we come No partner have You, here we come. Indeed, praise and blessings are Yours, and the Kingdom too No partner have You, here we come.

3. On entering Mecca, the pilgrims perform the first tawaf which consists of going around the Ka'ba seven times in an anticlockwise direction.

4. After completing the tawaf, the pilgrims perform the sa' yy which consists of running between the two little hills of Safa and Marwa located near the Ka'ba. These are the two hills where Hajirah ran in search of water when Prophet Abraham had to leave her there on Divine command.

5. After performing the sayy, the pilgrims move to Mina, a plain located about four miles east of Mecca, and spend the night there.

6. Next morning, the pilgrims leave for the Plain of Arafat located nine miles southeast of Mecca. They arrive there in the early afternoon, say the combined Zuhr and Asr Prayers and listen to a sermon given by the Imam. The pilgrims stay in the Plain of Arafat only till sunset. This is the same plain where the Prophet Muhammad delivered his farewell sermon.

7. After sunset the pilgrims leave Arafat and come to a place called Muzdalifah. In the Holy Quran, this place is referred to as al Mash'ar al Haram, the Sacred Monument. On reaching Muzdalifah, the pilgrims say their combined Maghrib and Isha Prayers and spend the night there. In the morning, after saying the Fajr Prayer, the pilgrims return to Mina once again.

8. The pilgrims reach Mina on the tenth day of Dhul Hijjah. This is the busiest day of the pilgrimage. The first ceremony that is performed at Mina is the throwing of small stones or ramy al jimar. In this ceremony the pilgrims throw stones at three pillars in a symbolic act of striking the devil.

9. The tenth day of Dhul Hijjah is also the day when pilgrims sacrifice their animals. This day is also celebrated all over the Muslim world as the festive day of Eid al Adha.

10. After performing the sacrifice, the pilgrims have their heads shaved or their hair clipped. After this they emerge from the state of ihram by wearing their everyday clothes.

11. Clad in their everyday clothes the pilgrims perform another tawaf of the Ka'ba. This tawaf is called tawaf e ziarat.

12. Before the tenth day of Dhul Hijjah ends, the pilgrims perform another sa' yy between the hills of Safa and Marwa.

13. After this the pilgrims return once again to Mina where they stay until the twelfth or thirteenth day of Dhul Hijjah. During these two or three days the pilgrims continue to perform the ceremony of ramy al jimar or throwing of stones.

14. On the afternoon of the twelfth Dhul Hijjah (or of the thirteenth) the pilgrims return to Mecca for the last ceremony of the pilgrimage. This ceremony consists of the farewell tawaf of the Ka'ba after which the entire pilgrimage is completed, and the pilgrims are free to go wherever they wish.

Although not part of the prescribed pilgrimage, many pilgrims carry on to Medinah and visit Masjid al Nabvi or the Prophet's Mosque. It was in the compound of this Mosque that Prophet Muhammad was buried, while the Hajj may only be performed during the prescribed dates of the month of Dhul Hijjah, a Lesser Pilgrimage called Umrah may be made individually at any time during the year.

Photo by Haidan on Unsplash.com

The Secret To Healthy Living After Forty,Aging And The Need Of A Healthy Lifestyle

(Abdul Hai Tahir Muntzim Ishaat Windsor North Ansarullah Canada)

Aging is a natural process that brings changes to the body, metabolism, and overall health.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"It is Allah Who created you in a state of weakness, then gave you strength after weakness, then, after strength, gave you weakness and old age."

Surah Ar-Rum (30:55)

This verse shows that physical strength and decline are part of life. However, adopting a healthy lifestyle can help us reduce the negative effects of aging.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) said: *"There are two blessings which many people lose: health and free time"*

Sahih Bukhari, Hadith 6412.

This hadith emphasizes the value of health and encourages us to maintain a balanced life to enjoy long-lasting well-being.

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (Peace be upon Him) stated:

"One should value health and well-being and protect the body, for only a healthy body can effectively serve faith and perform worship"

Malfuzat, Volume 2, Page 112.

He also said:

"Old age softens the heart, instills humility, and brings a person closer to God. Worship in this stage of life has a special sweetness if one practices patience and gratitude"

Malfuzat, Volume 4, Page 328.

Why does a Healthy Lifestyle Matters with Age? As we age, our immune system weakens, muscle strength declines, and the risk of chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and bone issues increase. However, a healthy lifestyle can reduce these effects, improve quality of life, and help maintain health for a longer time.

Some Healthy Living Tips by Age Group are as follows:

Age 40–50: Build a Strong Foundation

• Diet: Focus on fiber-rich foods (whole grain bread, vegetables, fruits), low-fat proteins, and avoid processed foods. Drink plenty of water.

• Exercise: Include strength training and activities that support flexibility and cardiovascular health (like brisk walking, cycling, swimming).

• Lifestyle: Practice stress reduction (meditation or hobbies), get 7–8 hours of sleep, and go for regular checkups (blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar).

Age 50–60: Strengthen Immunity and Mobility

• Diet: Increase calcium and vitamin D (milk, yogurt, leafy greens), consume healthy fats (almonds, olive oil, fish), and reduce salt and sugar.

• Exercise: Continue strength training but focus more on joint-friendly exercises (yoga, Pilates, swimming).

• Lifestyle: Prioritize mental health, maintain strong social connections, and regularly check heart, bones, and eyesight.

Age 60–70: Maintain Strength and Prevent Disease

• Diet: Ensure protein intake (eggs, fish, lentils) to preserve muscle. Include antioxidant-rich foods (turmeric, ginger, berries).

• Exercise: Focus on balance and flexibility (Tai Chi, stretching) to prevent falls. Daily walks are excellent.

• Lifestyle: Keep your mind sharp through reading, puzzles, maintain a healthy weight, and get essential vaccinations (flu, pneumonia, shingles).

Age 70+: Stay Independent and Energetic.

• Diet: Eat easily digestible foods, stay hydrated, and take supplements as per doctor's advice.

• Exercise: Gentle stretches, walking, and chair exercises to keep circulation active.

• Lifestyle: Engage in social activities, maintain a positive attitude, and rely on a strong support system for emotional well-being.

In conclusion, by making small, consistent changes in our daily habits, we can not only live longer but enjoy a healthier, happier, and more active life. Let us commit to embracing a healthy lifestyle, starting today.

Source: www.freepik.com

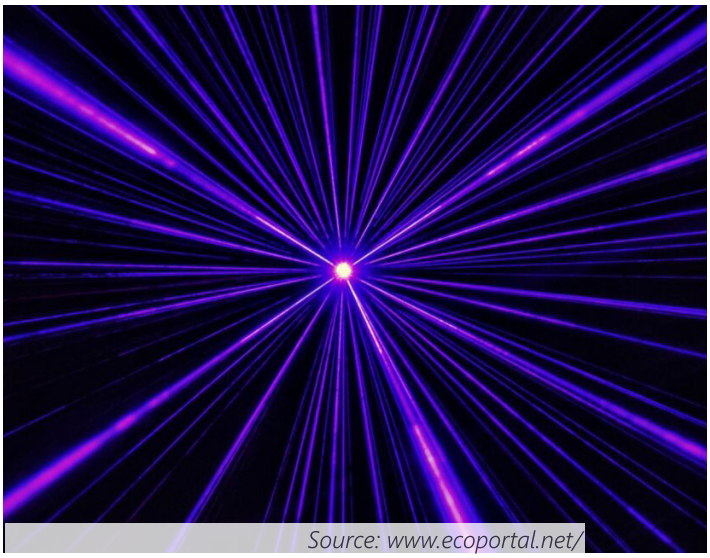
“Solid light” created for the first time in history – It’s brighter than white

(Dr. Hameed A. Mirza Majlis Peace Village East)

Light is something we see and use every day, but scientists are now learning that it can do much more than just help us see. Normally, we think of light as either a wave or as tiny particles called photons. But under the right conditions, light can behave in strange, surprising ways—so much so that it can even start acting like a solid.

How Light Behaves

When atoms get charged with enough energy, they release light in the form of photons. These photons carry different levels of energy, and that’s what gives us different colors of light. But light isn’t just for seeing. If scientists can control photons well enough, they believe it could even be used to send information across the universe through a phenomenon called quantum entanglement.



Source: www.ecoportal.net/

The Discovery of Solid Light

Recently, researchers made an amazing discovery: they managed to create something called solid light. Normally, light doesn’t have mass—it’s just energy. But in a special experiment, scientists in Italy fired lasers through a crystal. Inside, light particles (photons) mixed with atoms to form new particles called polaritons. These polaritons started behaving like matter—like something you could actually touch.

In this new state, light behaved both like a solid (holding its shape) and like a fluid (flowing smoothly). This strange new form is called a super-solid. The light not only shined brighter than normal but also formed a neat, crystal-like pattern, which is completely unheard of for regular light.

How They Made It Happen

To make solid light, the scientists had to cool everything down to nearly absolute zero—the coldest temperature possible (around -273°C or -460°F). At this extreme cold, particles slow down and stop bouncing around, which makes it easier to see how they interact. That’s when the magic happens—quantum effects take over, and particles can merge together and behave

like one.

Why It Matters

This discovery shows that light—something we used to think of as just energy—can act like matter under the right conditions. While photons still don't have mass in the normal sense, this new state helps scientists understand how light might behave in extreme places, like near black holes or in the early universe. It could also lead to new technologies in the future, like super-fast computers or advanced communication systems.

In short, solid light is changing the way we understand both energy and matter—and we're just beginning to explore its potential.

How excellently Hazrat Promised Messiah (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) expounded on this subject in his poetry. He wrote:

کیا عجب تو نے ہر اک ذرّہ میں رکھے ہیں خواص
کون پڑھ سکتا ہے سارا دفتر اُن اسرار کا

How wondrous—that You have placed such powers in every particle,

Who can read the entire record of these mysteries?

تیری قدرت کا کوئی بھی انتہا پاتا نہیں
کس سے کھل سکتا ہے پیچ اس عقدۂ دشوار کا

No one can ever reach the limits of Your power,

Who can unravel the knot of this complex enigma?

THE FASCINATING TRAVELS OF ZULQARNAIN – HOW RICH COUNTRIES SHOULD HELP POOR COUNTRIES

(Mohammad Shahab Khokhar – Mississauga North)

How should developed and rich countries treat poor countries? Especially when the poor countries are in desperate need of help for their very survival. History does not depict a good picture. With a few exceptions, rich countries have capitalized on the vulnerabilities of poorer countries and treated them in a way that further increased their problems and worries.

The question remains: How should rich countries treat poor countries that need help?

The fascinating description of the travels of Zulqarnain, as mentioned in the Sura Al-Kahf (Chapter 18) of the Holy Qur'an, provides us with some interesting and practical guidelines.

Before we delve deeper into the travels of Zulqarnain, let's review the typical "peaceful" ways in which rich countries assert their influence on poor countries:

Loans with Strings Attached (Debt Diplomacy)

Financial institutions and banks, largely influenced by developed countries, offer loans to developing countries—but often with strict conditions.

- Loans require structural adjustment programs (SAPs), like cutting public services, privatizing industries, and opening markets.
- If debts become unmanageable, countries surrender control over key economic decisions or assets (e.g., ports, energy grids).
- Economic policies are shaped more by creditors than local governments.

Aid Dependency and Influence

Foreign aid often comes with political or economic expectations—like trade agreements, military alliances, or support in international forums.

a. Aid is sometimes tied to buying goods or services from the donor country.

b. Long-term aid dependency can prevent self-sustaining development.

c. NGOs funded by donors may reflect foreign priorities more than local ones. Sovereignty is undermined, and local priorities are often sidelined.

Technology and Intellectual Property Control

Developed countries dominate in R&D and control most patents and IP, which gives them major leverage over poorer nations.

- High-tech exports (e.g., medical equipment, AI, defense tech) often come with licensing restrictions or surveillance risks.
- Countries must pay royalties or import

high-cost tech they can't afford to develop.

- Even "technology transfers" often involve partial access or strings attached.
- Developing nations struggle to build independent tech ecosystems. Local expertise and know-how are never developed beyond a meager level.

Control of Natural Resources and Commodities

Multinational corporations from developed nations often extract raw materials (oil, cobalt, gold, etc.) in poorer countries.

- Host governments grant concessions or licenses to foreign companies due to a lack of capital or technology.
- Revenues often benefit elites or foreign investors more than local populations.
- Environmental and social impacts are often downplayed or ignored.
- Countries are locked into resource dependency without building processing or manufacturing capacity.

Trade Policies & Market Access

Global trade rules—often written or pushed by wealthy countries—can limit the industrial growth of developing countries.

- Developed nations subsidize their own agriculture or industries, making it hard for poorer countries to compete.
- Tariffs and quotas restrict exports from the Global South.
- Free trade agreements may force open markets before local industries can compete.
- Developing nations stay stuck in low-value exports, unable to diversify.

Now let's look at what Sura Al-Kahf and the travels of Zulqarnain teach us.

Sura Al-Kahf is full of amazing incidents and stories that can be deciphered in many different ways. However, we will be looking at the literal translation of a few verses of the Sura:

- "Then he followed another way. [18:93]
- Until, when he reached the place between the two mountains, he found beneath them a people who would scarcely understand a word. [18:94]
- They said, 'O Dhul-Qarnain, verily, Gog and Magog are creating disorder in the earth; shall we then pay thee tribute on condition that thou set up a barrier between us and them?' [18:95]
- He replied, 'The power with which my Lord has endowed me about this is better, but you may help me with physical strength; I will set up between you and them a rampart.' [18:96]
- 'Bring me blocks of iron.' They did so till, when he had levelled up the space between the two mountain sides, he said, 'Now blow with your bellows.' They blew with bellows till, when he had made it red as fire, he said, 'Bring me molten copper that I may pour it thereon.' [18:97]
- So they (Gog and Magog) were not able to scale it, nor were they able to dig through it. [18:98]
- Thereupon he said, 'This is a mercy from my Lord. But when the promise of my Lord shall come to pass, He will break it into pieces. And the promise of my Lord is certainly true.' [18:99]"

Now, this is a classic case study of a poor country struggling to survive against its enemies and desperately pleading with a rich country for survival.

Imagine how this would turn out today, most probably not so well for the poor country. However, the tale of Zulqarnain tells us the right way to act in such situations.

Let's break down the actions of Zulqarnain, leader of the rich country, step by step:

- He agrees to help protect the poor country from its enemies

Source: https://mariewillermark

- He refuses to accept any compensation for this help, even though the compensation is offered voluntarily.
- He acknowledges the wealth and blessings that Allah has bestowed upon him and his people and savors it more than any help from the less fortunate people.
- The people of the poor country are then involved in the massive project of creating a defensive wall.
- The locally available natural resources like iron and copper are used, and the local manpower is put to work.
- The complete list of raw materials and the process of constructing the wall is shared with the local people, resulting in a total transfer of knowledge and technology.
- In the end, the successful project is attributed to Allah's blessing.

Zulqarnain's actions enable the poor country to not only construct the desperately needed defensive wall but also maintain it and construct more walls in the future as required (as they now understand how to do it with locally available resources).

Hence, this makes the poor country self-reliant in keeping their enemy at bay and protecting their people on a continuous basis.

Take a moment to think about the so-called defensive treaties and pacts like NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and others. And not to mention hundreds of incidents in recent history where poor countries have been given arms and ammunition at a cost and commitment they can not bear, resulting in a total surrender of their sovereignty to the rich and "donor" countries.

The fundamental reason why Zulqarnain was able to do this is mentioned in the beginning of the selected verses, when, in response to an offer of compensation from the poor country, he says:

"The power with which my Lord has endowed me about this is better..."

It is this understanding and acknowledgement of the blessings of Allah that can enable rich countries to sincerely help poor countries without any greed or deception.

May Allah help us understand the wonderful teachings of the Holy Qur'an, and may rich countries rise above their petty desires, thank Allah for His blessings, and help the poor countries sincerely.

Photo Gallery

Members of Majlis Ansarullah Peace Village

Members of Majlis Ansarullah Peace Village South East visited various shelter homes and provided fresh food. One non-Ahmadi friend from one of those shelters visited the mosque. Some of the highlights are shown in the following photos.